

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 /072 W

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R 271808Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7323

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: STRIKE ACTIVITY

1. AMONG THE SPORADIC STRIKE ACTIONS ACROSS THE NATION WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVING ATTENTION IN THE PRESS SINCE THE SUMMER VACATION PERIOD ENDED, THE POSTAL AND CONSTRUCTION SECTORS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST NOTEWORTHY. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A CONTINUATION OF EARLIER STRIKE ACTIONS LAUNCHED IN JANUARY (WHEN POSTAL WORKERS WERE "MILITARIZED") AND JULY, CLOSE TO TEN THOUSAND POSTAL WORKERS IN TWELVE SPANISH PROVINCES (INCLUDING ALMOST FOUR THOUSAND IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MADRID) WERE OUT OVER THE WEEKEND. AS OF SEPT 27,

THE POSTAL STRIKE BECAME NATIONWIDE, AFFECTING AN ESTIMATED 30,000 OF THE 57,000 POSTAL WORKERS. THE MAILMEN ARE DEMANDING THAT PROMISES ALLEGEDLY MADE TO THEM LAST JULY--INCLUDING AN 18 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE TO BE EFFECTIVE IN SEPTEMBER--BE KEPT. THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF THE POST OFFICE HAS STATED THAT SUCH AN INCREASE IS BEYOND ITS MEANS, AND THAT FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE EXTENDED TO ALL CIVIL SERVANTS.

2. TO ADD TO THE CONFUSION, IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT GROUP IS THE LEGITIMATE SPOKESMAN FOR THE STRIKING MAILMEN, AND BOTH THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS AND THE SOCIALIST UGT ARE INVOLVED IN THIS INFIGHTING. FOLLOWING THE INITIAL STRIKE CALL ON SEPT 22, THERE WERE SOME CLASHES BETWEEN MAILMEN AND POLICE IN MADRID ON THE 25, RESULTING IN THREE ARRESTS. WITH NO EARLY END IN SIGHT, POSTAL AUTHORITIES ON SEPT 25 LAUNCHED "OPERATION MERCURY" UNDER WHICH VOLUNTEERS (PAID AND UNPAID) WERE ENLISTED IN AN ATTEMPT TO CLEAR THE BACKLOG OF SOME FOUR MILLION LETTERS THAT HAD BUILT UP. THE LARGEY UNSUCCESSFUL OPERATION WAS HALTED WHEN THE STRIKE BECAME NATIONWIDE.

3. SINCE EARLY SEPTEMBER, THERE HAVE BEEN A SERIES OF CONSTRUCTION SECTOR STRIKES WHICH HAVE CENTERED IN THE NORTH (THE PROVINCES OF LA CORUNA, LEON AND BURGOS), AND HAVE INVOLVED MAY THOUSANDS OF WORKERS. THE BASIC ISSUE HAS BEEN THE DEMAND FOR HIGHER WAGES. IN LA CORUNA, SOME TWENTY THOUSAND STRIKING CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE REPORTEDLY ON THE VERGE OF A SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD RAISE MONTHLY WAGES IMMEDIATELY BY PTS. 2,500 (U.S. APPROX. \$37.00) GUARANTEE NO REPRISALS AGAINST STRIKERS, AND CALL FOR THE CREATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES AT THE PLANT LEVEL.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF A "HOT AUTUMN" CAN STILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE FUTURE TENSE, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE TEMPO OF LABOR UNREST HAS PICKED UP AND WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO DO SO AS SOME OF THE MAJOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS EXPIRE IN THE COMING WEEKS (SEE MADRID 6944). WE CAN ALSO EXPECT TO SEE--AS WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE MAILMEN--INCREASED INTER-UNION RIVALRY AS VARIOUS LABOR ELEMENTS JOCKEY FOR POSITION.
STABLER

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